

happened by my own will and agency?—Absurd!—  
“Oh, no, no: most assuredly not—it is a phenomenon, hem! hem!—a phenomenon—not unfrequently attending on the nightmare,” I answered with as good a grace as possible.

“Pho pho, doctor!—Nonsense!—You must really think me a child, to try to mislead me with such stuff as that! I tell you again I am in as sober possession of my senses as ever I was in my life; and, once more, I assure you, that, in truth and reality, my head is turned—literary so.”

“Well, well!—So I see!—It is, indeed, a very extraordinary case—a very unusual one: but I don’t, by any means, despair of bringing all things round again!—Pray tell me how this singular and afflicting accident happened to you?”

“Certainly,” said he, despondingly. “Last night, or rather this morning, I dreamed that I had got to the West Indies—to Barbadoes, an island where I have, as you know, a little estate left me by my uncle, C—; and that, a few moments after I had entered the plantation, for the purpose of seeing the slaves at work, there came a sudden hurricane, a more tremendous one than was ever known in those parts;—trees, canes, huts, all were swept before it! Even the very ground on which we stood seemed whirled away beneath us! I turned my head a moment to look at the direction in which things were going, when, in the very act of turning, the blast suddenly caught my head, and—oh, my God!—blew it completely round on my shoulders, till my face looked quite—directly behind me—over my back! In vain did I almost wrench my head off my shoulders, in attempting to twist it round again; and what with horror, and—altogether—in short, I awoke—and found the frightful reality of my situation! Oh, gracious Heaven!” continued Mr. N—, clasping his hands, and looking upwards, “what have I done to deserve such a horrible visitation as this?”

Humph! it is quite clear what is the matter here, thought I; so assuming an air of becoming professional gravity, I felt his pulse, begged him to let me see his tongue, made many enquiries about his general health, and then proceeded to subject all parts of his neck to a most rigorous examination; before, behind, and on each side, over every natural elevation and depression, if such the usual varieties of surface may be termed, did my fingers pass; he, all the while sighing, and cursing his evil stars, and wondering how it was that he had not been killed by the ‘dislocation.’ This little farce over, I continued silent for some minutes, scarcely able, the while, to control my inclination to burst into fits of laughter, as if pondering the possibility of being able to devise some means of cure.

“Ah,—thank God!—I have hit it—I have hit it!”

“What!—what—eh?—what is it?”  
“I’ve thought of a remedy, which, if—if—any thing in the world can bring it about, will set matters right again—will bring back your head to its former position.”

“Oh, God be praised!—Dear—dear doctor!—if you do but succeed, I shall consider a thousand pounds but the earnest of what I will do to evince my gratitude!” he exclaimed, squeezing my hand fervently. “But I am not absolutely certain that we shall succeed,” said I cautiously. “We will, however, give the medicine a twenty-four hours’ trial; during all which time you must be in perfect repose, and consent to live in utter darkness. Will you abide by my directions?”

“Oh, yes, yes, yes! dear doctor!—What is the inestimable remedy? Tell me, tell me the name of my ransom. I’ll never divulge it, never!”

“That’s not consistent with my plans at present, Mr. N—,” I replied, seriously; “but, if successful, I pledge my honour to reveal the secret to you.” “Well, but, at least you’ll explain the nature of its operation, eh? Is it internal, external, what?” The remedy, I told him, would be of both forms; the latter, however, the more immediate agent of his recovery; the former, preparatory, predisposing. I may tell the reader simply what my physic was to be. three bread-pills (the ordinary placebo in such cases) every hour; a strong laudanum draught in the evening; and a huge bread-and-water poultice for his neck, with which it was to

be environed till the parts were sufficiently mollified to admit of the neck’s being twisted back again into its former position; and, when that was the case, why, to ensure its permanency, he was to wear a broad band of strengthening plaster for a week!! This was the bright device, struck out by me, all at a heat; and, explained to the poor victim with the utmost solemnity and deliberation of manner, all the wise winks and knowing nods, and hesitating ‘hems’ and ‘has’ of professional usage, sufficed to inspire him with some confidence as to the results. I confess I shared the most confident expectations of success. A sound night’s rest, hourly pill-taking, and the clammy saturating sensation round his neck; I fully believed would bring him round; and, in the full anticipation of seeing him disabused of the ridiculous notion he had taken into his head, I promised to see him the first thing in the morning, and took my departure.

To be Concluded in our next.

FROM BLACKWOOD’S MAGAZINE FOR JANUARY.

#### THE PENITENT’S RETURN.

My father’s house once more,  
In its own moonlight beauty! Yet around,  
Something, amidst the dewy calm profound,  
Broods, never mark’d before.

Is it the brooding night?  
Is it the shivery creeping on the air,  
That makes the home, so tranquil and so fair,  
O’erwhelming to my sight.

All solemnized it seems,  
And still’d, and darken’d in each time-worn hue,  
Since the rich clustering roses met my view,  
As now, by starry gleams.

And this high elm, where last  
I stood and linger’d—where my sisters made  
Our mother’s bower—I deem’d not that it cast  
So far and dark a shade!

How spirit-like a tone  
Rings through yon tree? My father’s place was there  
At evening hours, while soft winds waved his hair!  
Now those grey locks are gone!

My soul grows faint with fear!  
Even as if angel-steps had mark’d the sod.  
I tremble where I move—the voice of God  
Is in the foliage here!

Is it indeed the night  
That makes my home so awful? Faithless hearted!  
’Tis that from thine own bosom hath departed  
The in-born gladdening light!

No outward thing is changed;  
Only the joy of parity is fled,  
And, long from Nature’s melodies estranged,  
Thou hear’st their tones with dread.

Therefore, the calm abode  
By thy dark spirit is o’erhung with shade,  
And, therefore, in the leaves, the voice of God  
Makes thy sick heart afraid!

The night-flowers round that door,  
Still breathe pure fragrance on the untainted air;  
Thou, thou alone, art worthy now no more  
To pass, and rest thee there!

And must I turn away?  
—Hark, hark!—it is my mother’s voice I hear.  
Sadder than once it seem’d—yet soft and clear—  
Doth she not seem to pray?

My name!—I caught the sound!  
Oh! blessed tones of love—the deep, the mild—  
Mother, my mother! Now receive thy child,  
Take back the Lost and Found!

MRS. HEMANS.

FROM THE FORGET-ME-NOT FOR 1831.

#### BESSY BELL AND MARY GRAY.

A Scottish Legend of 1666. BY DELTA.

It was yet in the Doric days of Scotland, (comparing the present with the past) that Kenneth Bell, one of the Lairds of the green holms of Kinvaid, having lost his lady by a sudden dispensation of Providence, remained for a long time wrapt up in the reveries of

grief, and utterly inconsolable. The tide of affliction was fortuitously stemmed by the nurse bringing before him his helpless infant daughter—the very miniature of her departed mother, after whom she had been named.

The looks of the innocent babe recalled the father’s heart to a sense of the duties which life yet required of him; and little Bessy grew up in health and beauty the apple of her father’s eye. Nor was his fondness for her diminished, as year after year more fully developed those lineaments which at length ripened into a more matured likeness of her who was gone. She became as it were, a part of the old man’s being; she attended him in his garden walks; rode out with him on her palfrey on sunny mornings; and was as his shadow by the evening hearth. She doated on him with more than a daughter’s fondness, and he at length, seemed bound to earth by no tie save her existence.

It was thus that Bessy Bell grew up to woman’s stature; and, in the quiet of her father’s hall, she was now, in her eighteenth year, a picture of feminine loveliness. All around had heard of the beauty of the heiress of Kinvaid. The cottager who experienced his bounty drank to her health in his homely jug of nut-brown ale; and the squire, at wassal, toasted her in the golden wine cup.

The dreadful plague of 1666 now fell out, and rapidly spread its devastations over Scotland. Man stood aghast; the fountains of society were broken up; and day after day brought into rural seclusion some additional proofs of its fearful ravages. Nought was heard around but the wailings of deprivation; and omens in the heavens and on the earth heralded miseries yet to come.

Having being carried from Edinburgh (in whose ill-ventilated closes no wonder it had made a terrible havoc) across the Frith of Forth, the northern countries were now thrown into alarm, and families broke up, forsaking the towns and villages to disperse themselves under the freer atmosphere of the country. Among others, the laird of Kinvaid trembled for the safety of his beloved child, and the arrival of young Bruce, of Poulfofs Priory, afforded him an excellent opportunity of having his daughter escorted to Lynedoch, the residence of a warmly attached friend and relative.

Under the protection of this gallant young squire, Bessy rode off on the following morning, and, the day being delightful, the young pair, happy in themselves, forgot, in the beauty of nature, the miseries that encompassed them.

Besides being a youth of handsome appearance and engaging manners, young Bruce had seen a good deal of the world, having for several years served as a member of the body guard of the French King. He had returned from Paris only a few months before, and yet wore the cap and plume peculiar to the distinguished corps to which he still belonged. The heart of poor Bessy Bell was as sensitive as it was innocent and unsophisticated; and, as her protector made his proud steed fret and curvet by her side, she thought to herself, as they rode along, that he was like one of the knights concerning whom she had read, in romance, and unknown to herself, there awoke in her bosom a feeling to which it had hitherto been a stranger.

Her reception at Lynedoch was most cordial; nor the less so, perhaps, on the part of the young lady of that mansion, because her attendant was Bruce, the secret but accepted suitor for the hand of Mary Gray. Ah! had this mystery been at once revealed to Bessy Bell, what a world of misery it would have saved her!

From the plague had our travellers been flying; but the demon of desolation was here before them, and the smoke was ceasing to ascend from many a cottage hearth. It became necessary that the household of Lynedoch should be immediately dispersed. Bruce and Lynedoch remained in the vicinity of the dwelling house, and a bower of turf and moss was reared for the young ladies on the pastoral banks of the Brauchie-burn, a tributary of the Almond.

It was there that Bessy Bell and Mary Gray lived for a while in rural seclusion, far from the bustle and parade of gay life; verifying in some measure what ancient poetry had feigned of the golden age. Bruce was a daily visitor at the bower by the Brauchie-burn; he wandered with them through the green solitudes; and under the summer sun and a blue sky, they threaded oftentimes together the maze of “many a holly-bush and bushy dell.” They chased the fantastic squirrel from bough to bough, and scared the thieving little wren from the thicket. Under the great trees would they seat themselves, and